

lacking skills, why has this government cut back on skills training, cut back on education?

Will the government in this next budget show that it is investing in a skills training program so that the laid-off workers can get those 300,000 jobs?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I carefully stated yesterday that this 300,000 figure is our interpretation of the help wanted index.

All the hon. member would have to do is travel across Canada, talk to employers and she would understand. She should also ask herself why she opposed the amendment to Bill C-21 which has seen training money going to unemployed Canadians, rising from \$1.2 billion to \$1.8 billion this year. That is for Canadian workers.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Northern Ontario has long suffered high rates of unemployment. As a result of this, many have exhausted UI claims and are now on social assistance. They are no less unemployed than those receiving UI benefits and yet no retraining through UI is available to them.

Will the minister consider integrating programs so that all unemployed have equality of access to retraining programs and UI?

• (1430)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): I will not use the word pathetic, but I remember this Liberal Party of Canada opposing the amendment to C-21, the Unemployment Insurance Act, which would have allowed this government to give unemployed workers exactly what the member is now asking for, that is training. We have in place programs worth \$1.8 billion that allow for the training of the unemployed this year.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Young people's hopes of finding their first

job are dimmer every day. Young Canadians such as Anna Nozza of Saint-Léonard want to work in order to contribute fully to our society.

Can the minister ensure this House and young Canadians that a training program to help young people find jobs will be introduced in the next budget?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, being from Quebec, the hon. member surely knows how enthusiastically my provincial counterpart, Mr. Bourbeau, implemented training programs for those young people in that province, which we support with the federal programs.

If the Liberal Party is asking me today whether I will go to Quebec and set up a new training program, the answer is no, I am not prepared to do that. However, I am prepared to continue to have discussions with Mr. Bourbeau in order to see how the Canadian Jobs Strategy can best serve the interests of young Quebecers.

* * *

[*English*]

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, since free trade, Canada has lost 40 auto parts plants and 19,000 auto parts jobs. Given this government's dismal record under its trade deal with the United States, can the government assure us today that it will not give away even more auto parts jobs under the coming deal with the United States and Mexico?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is talking apples and oranges. He is linking the free trade agreement to the auto pact. He knows that the auto pact was not a part of the free trade agreement. There is a problem today with the North American market for automobiles. The production of automobiles is down in the United States because sales are down in the United States. In Canada, where close to 90 per cent of our production goes to the United States, those sales are down because of the lower sales in the United States. That is the problem, not the free trade agreement and not the auto pact.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, the minister has to get his head out of the sand. We have lost 49 auto parts plants, and they are not coming back.